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LEBANON EMERGENCY RELIEF OPERATIONS

Information note by the Executive Director

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Introduction

1. With the outbreak of hostilities in Lebanon on 6 June 1982, UNICEF immediately launched a significant relief operation in consultation with the Secretary-General of the United Nations. The hostilities uprooted and dispersed tens of thousands of Lebanese and Palestinian families, deepening the suffering caused by almost continuous civil strife since the mid-1970s. Amid intense shelling, UNICEF moved swiftly into action to provide food, medical aid and other relief to the affected children and women.

2. UNICEF was able to respond immediately to emergency needs with on-the-ground assistance by virtue of its significant presence in Lebanon and its wide experience in the implementation of relief and rehabilitation programmes in the country since 1975. Beirut is the headquarters of UNICEF's regional office for the Middle East and North Africa as well as the country office for Lebanon, which has been implementing basic services programmes and assisting children deprived of a normal family life since 1979. The sub-office in Qana, South Lebanon, was established early in 1981 to implement reconstruction programmes south of the Litani River under an agreement reached in October 1980 between the Council of Development and Reconstruction (CDR) and UNICEF. By June 1982, the Qana office was involved in the implementation of some 280 projects to repair or rebuild facilities damaged during the events of the 1970s.

Funding relief operations

3. In mid-June, UNICEF's Executive Director launched a $5 million appeal for a 90-day intensive relief and rehabilitation programme. The Executive Director approved an allocation of $1 million from the Emergency Reserve Fund authorizing immediate on-the-spot expenditures to the level of $100,000 for the Beirut office, $50,000 for the Qana office and $25,000 for the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) Humanitarian Task Force, with which UNICEF co-operates closely in the south. Powdered-milk, bedding and other relief goods were purchased with these funds.

4. On 18 June at an informal donor meeting with representatives of 34 countries at headquarters, Governments and National Committees responded immediately to the Executive Director's appeal with contributions, pledges and fund-raising campaigns. Two meetings were held in subsequent months to keep donors abreast of relief needs and UNICEF's relief operations.

Organizational arrangements

5. Early in June, UNICEF's Deputy Executive Director for Operations was designated to co-ordinate emergency activities in Lebanon, while an emergency task force was established at headquarters to co-ordinate the supply, finance, fund-raising, administration, and public information aspects of emergency operations.

6. At the outset of the emergency, an inter-agency working group to co-ordinate the relief efforts of United Nations agencies in Lebanon was established at United Nations Headquarters under the chairmanship of the Secretary-General's special representative. Close contact with the International Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC) was maintained throughout. In late June, UNICEF provided the services of its former special representative to Kampuchea to assist the Secretary-General's special co-ordinator for Lebanon.

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United Nations inter-agency survey mission

7. At government request, an inter-agency survey mission headed by Mr. Anders Thunborg, Permanent Representative of Sweden to the United Nations, visited Lebanon from 4 July to 14 July to survey the relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction needs in Lebanon. The mission was composed of representatives of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator (UNDRO), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the World Food Programme (WFP), the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF. The subsequent report, estimated that 300,000 Lebanese and 83,000 Palestinians needed shelter, medical aid, food, water and sanitation services, and outlined four major priority areas: repair and re-equipment of hospitals and health clinic facilities; repair of the water supply systems; repair and refurnishing of elementary schools and other community centres; and emergency relief.

Visit of the Executive Director

8. In early July, the Executive Director visited east and west Beirut, the Bekaa valley, south Lebanon and Damascus. He discussed relief needs with the Lebanese President and Prime Minister, the chairman of the Lebanese Council for Development and Reconstruction (CDR), members of the United Nations survey team and UNICEF field staff. The visit had a positive, encouraging impact on local authorities and helped generate contributions for relief from Arab and traditional donor Governments.

Relief operations

9. Throughout Lebanon, relief operations were hampered by two major constraints: logistics and communications. The closure of seaports, airports and land routes made delivery of emergency relief difficult and necessitated the establishment of staging posts outside Lebanon and major local purchasing which affected the availability of essential consumer supplies in Lebanon.

10. Furthermore, the near total disruption of communications due to local power failures and damage to the telecommunications system was a major constraint to the co-ordination of relief operations between headquarters and the country offices, and between the field offices. UNICEF's attempts at telecommunication required constant effort to find a working link using the United Nations network, UNIFIL, commercial and other services that could be found, but these remained irregular and uncertain for most of the emergency period. As a result of these constraints, UNICEF operated through six offices: Damascus in Syria, West Beirut, Baabda, Dekouaneh, Qana and Cyprus.

Damascus

11. The first emergency staging area was established in Damascus under UNICEF's regional director for the Middle East. Two logistics experts were assigned to Damascus to co-ordinate logistics and overland distribution of relief consignments pending the reopening of sea routes to Lebanon.

12. Close contact with the Syrian Government, ICRC, the Syrian Red Cross and the Palestinian Red Crescent was maintained throughout the emergency to facilitate relief operations in Lebanon, particularly in the Bekaa Valley, and on behalf of Lebanese and Palestinian refugees in Syria.

Beirut

13. While non-essential staff were evacuated in June, the Beirut office functioned throughout the emergency to provide relief assistance. By mid-July, the regional director travelled between Damascus and Beirut to provide overall direction to relief operations.

14. Working conditions were difficult as well as dangerous. Movement of personnel and relief supplies was severely hampered by constant shelling and fuel shortages, particularly during the long Beirut siege. The breakdown of telex and telephone services enhanced the sense of isolation. The cut-off of food, fuel, water and electricity supplies, and the depletion of water supplies during the siege also jeopardized the functioning of hospitals.

15. The Beirut office purchased powdered-milk, infant-food, foodstuffs, children's clothing, kerosene stoves and garbage bags for the displaced population. Relief operations were co-ordinated with the Lebanese High Relief Committee, the Lebanese Red Cross, ICRC, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and various non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Baabda

16. With communications from the west Beirut office almost non-existent, an office to co-ordinate relief efforts with the ministries concerned and to maintain close contacts with potential donors and foreign press correspondents was established in Baabda, in east Beirut.

Dekouaneh

17. An office in Dekouaneh, south-east of Beirut, was opened late in July to serve as communications outpost and provide additional support for the west Beirut office. It was not involved in emergency operations, having as its main role the reactivation of the regular programmes of the area office.

Qana

18. The Qana office immediately responded to the emergency needs of war victims, particularly children and mothers, while maintaining, to the extent possible, its ongoing reconstruction projects. With UNIFIL co-operation which extended to UNICEF its procurement and warehousing facilities, the office purchased, stocked and distributed over 30 tons of powdered-milk, baby-food, soap, water purification tablets, water containers, various foodstuffs, drugs and medical supplies in Tyre, Sidon and other south Lebanon areas .

Nicosia

19. In preparation for the reopening of the Lebanese ports, an additional emergency staging area was established in Nicosia with two outposted Beirut staff and facilities and other assistance provided by UNDP and WFP. Nicosia served as channel for the delivery of four large-capacity generators for the Beirut water system and 134 containers of kerosene stoves, water purification tablets provided by the Swiss Government, powdered-milk, sugar, oil and medical supplies donated by the Spanish Government, 46 tons of biscuits from Japan, and various other relief supplies. The staging area functioned until mid-September when normal communications and transport links with Lebanon were restored.

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Inter-agency co-ordination

20. In Beirut, co-ordination between all United Nations agencies, and with the ICRC and other volunteer relief agencies was established and maintained throughout by the special co-ordinator. The Qana office co-operated closely with UNIFIL and served as a focal point for volunteer agencies operating in the south. In Damascus, co-operation was maintained with UNHCR, UNRWA and the United Nations Disengagement Observation Force (UNDOF) for logistic support for the delivery of all relief supplies through Syria. Relief operations were carried out in close consultation with government authorities.

21. UNICEF co-operation with most of the United Nations agencies, ICRC, the Lebanese Red Cross, the Red Crescent Societies, and other NGOs had a positive impact on contributions from various donors including UNHCR, WHO and the American Save the Children Foundation.

Public information

22. Some 40 journalists were invited to cover UNICEF's "Operation Water Jug", initiated to maintain water supplies to west Beirut. The regional public information officer also met with National Committees and the media in Europe, Canada and the United States of America. A regular flow of information was maintained at headquarters and at country level through film and situation reports on the constantly changing conditions.

On-the-ground assistance

23. The turbulent situation and the difficulties of movement and communications hampered the thorough assessment of emergency needs and flexibility of response. In Qana, assessment started as early as 7 June. In Beirut, a survey of damaged schools, health institutions and water and health needs was completed. UNICEF staff from Damascus made several visits to the Bekaa valley to evaluate the situation of the displaced many of whom had taken shelter in open fields and unoccupied schools.

24. By 15 June, the first of four UNICEF-chartered consecutive airlifts transported approximately 160 tons of relief supplies from the UNICEF Packing and Assembly Centre in Copenhagen (UNIPAC) to Damascus including blankets, towels, soap, oral rehydration salts, medical supplies, water purification tablets, dispensary and drug sets, syringes, needles, ampicillin, penicillin, first-aid kits, children's wheelchairs, cooking sets, kerosene stoves, tents, cooking oil, K-Mix II (a therapeutic food), and water tanks and containers. These four airlifts were supplemented by a UNDRO air charter of similar supplies which arrived on 7 July.

25. UNDOF provided its transport and radio services to carry supplies to Lebanon. Two UNICEF convoys reached Baalbek in the Bekaa valley on 17 June and 5 July with shelter material, medical supplies, cooking sets and stoves. On 18 and 24 June, two 15-truck convoys carrying medical supplies, water-tanks and other relief items reached west Beirut via Homs, Arida and Tripoli with the Lebanese army providing a security escort from the Syrian border to Beirut. On 22 July, a convoy reached Qana from Damascus and Beirut, and in August, two convoys from east Beirut delivered several truck-loads of food, water-pipes and other relief assistance from east to besieged west Beirut.

26. Many additional tons of powdered-milk, tinned food, drugs, hospital supplies, tents, blankets, mattresses, jerrycans, water tanks, kerosene stoves, lamps, infant clothing, plastic sheets for shelter, ambulances, small trucks and generators were procured in Beirut, Qana and Damascus for affected populations in Beirut, south Lebanon, the Bekaa valley and the displaced in Syria.

27. Distribution was affected to families, hospitals, clinics and orphanages through the High Relief Committee, which included local relief committees in all the affected areas, the General Union of Palestinian Women, the Red Cross, the Red Crescent Societies, religious and village leaders in the south, UNRWA, the UNIFIL Humanitarian Task Force and some international volunteer agencies operating in Lebanon.

28. With many Lebanese and Palestinian refugees arriving in Syria, the Damascus office, in early July, assisted authorities with the supply of locally available items such as milk, baby-food, candles, soap, bedding, towels and infant clothing which were initially distributed to some 500 families by UNRWA and the relief committee established by the Government of Syria. UNHCR funded these supplies amounting to $538,000 for the benefit of a targeted 13,000 refugees.

Water

29. Water delivery was identified as the highest priority in Beirut and south Lebanon, the maintenance of which required electricity for pumping stations, constant repair of damaged pipelines and repair and replacement of generators and equipment. In early July, an informal emergency water supply co-ordination group was established in Beirut with the participation of the Ministry of Hydraulics, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), ICRC and UNICEF.

30. In South Lebanon, the pumping station at Ras-el-Ain, one of the two major water systems serving 120 villages, was almost totally destroyed as a result of the hostilities. Ras-El-Ain (Arabic for Head of the Spring) is an ancient artesian source of pure spring water which provides both drinking water through a modern pumping station and irrigation through a viaduct system built by the Romans. Local contractors were engaged and UNICEF monitored the clearing of debris and the retrieval and temporary repair of damaged equipment to enable the pumping station to provide a minimum water supply to as many villages as possible. To arrest flooding from the damaged irrigation system, UNICEF also undertook repair of the viaduct and irrigation channels. The rebuilding of the station and installation of new pumps and a water treatment plant are expected to be completed in a year.

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31. UNICEF also undertook emergency repairs to restore the water supply in many villages in the south, requiring the provision and installation of generators, water-pipes, water storage tanks and other equipment in Zahle, Damour and Ain-el-Helwe camp, and supplied vans to the water authorities in Tyre, Sidon and Damour. A construction team was engaged to repair the water pipelines in Tyre and the water tunnels in Barouk.

32. Damage to pumping stations and pipelines and the limited power supply for pumping water severely affected water supplies in west Beirut. To maintain water supplies for the affected population, many of whom had no access to water, pumping mains needed repair and special measures to cope with power shortages had to be taken. Operation Water Jug was launched on 30 June and eventually reached an estimated 5 million people. UNICEF's role in providing water supplies to west Beirut residents was perhaps its most important service to the city during the emergency.

33. Operation Water Jug installed over 200 locally manufactured steel water tanks at 50 distribution centres and schools occupied by refugees. These reservoirs were filled several times a day and each provided drinking water to 3,000 residents. Twenty-five non-functioning wells were rehabilitated through the installation of submersible pumps while new wells were drilled.

34. Some 14 "mobile" generators were mounted on trucks to pump water on a 24-hour basis from the city's 200 private and public wells, while alternative sources of power at damaged pumping stations were provided. UNICEF installed 33 locally purchased generators at sites designated by the Beirut water authority and at 10 temporary hospitals and health centres in west Beirut, and provided booster pumps, water tankers and other equipment.

35. Four teams of technicians were engaged on a stand-by basis to carry out under UNICEF supervision emergency repairs to damaged water-pipes and pumping stations. UNICEF also provided pipes, vehicles, a pumphouse and ancillary equipment for the Bourj-al-Brajneh camp area.

36. The quality of drinking water was constantly monitored to avert epidemics. When the water flow to west Beirut was halted, UNICEF in co-operation with UNRWA, undertook a water chlorination programme to minimize the health risks resulting from the increased reliance on private wells with saline water. These efforts helped prevent the outbreak of typhoid and other water-borne diseases. Emergency repairs were also made to the city's sewerage and drainage system.

37. Following the massacre in the Sabra and Chatila camps, UNICEF assured a continuing water supply to the Palestinians remaining in the camps by trucking in water, installing pumps and mobile generators, cleaning wells, repairing pipelines, constructing more storage tanks and clearing rubble. Sanitation services were also provided to prevent disease.

Sanitation

38. In mid-July, UNICEF initiated - with staff from the American University of Beirut and French volunteers - the pick-up of uncollected refuse and garbage which posed serious health hazards in west and south Beirut and in the camps. By mid-August, 35 workers with 30 sweepers, three loaders, and seven trucks were clearing some 250 tons of garbage daily. In Tyre, the Boy Scout Association received shovels, brooms, buckets and other hand tools to clear rubble from the town and surrounding villages.

Health

39. In south Lebanon, six major hospitals were extensively damaged. The hospital at Saida required total reconstruction. Emergency repairs were made to the hospitals in Tyre, Shahhar and Baabda, and stand-by generators were installed at several rural hospitals. Because of damage to health institutions, temporary emergency hospitals were set up in schools and hotels around west Beirut. The temporary hospitals and health centres received essential drugs, medical supplies and dispensary sets, and generators to maintain water supplies.

40. Towards the end of July, as a protection against epidemics, UNRWA, UNIFIL and volunteer agencies, implemented a child immunization campaign through government health institutions. UNICEF supplied 50,000 doses of antimeasles vaccines, 40 cool bags, 700 vaccine carriers and vaccine cards.

Education

41. Before the end of August, repairs to several schools in the south had been completed while furniture had been distributed to 54 schools. In the Beirut area, the Ministry of Education estimated that 65 per cent of the schools were in need of repair and some 30,000 children were without adequate facilities. The reopening of school was postponed one month to 11 November to permit the necessary repairs to be made. Emergency repairs to the first group of 12 schools in Beirut began the first week of November.

Post-emergency assistance

42. In mid-September, as the situation stabilized sufficiently for evacuated staff to return to Lebanon, the offices in Baabda and Dekouaneh were disbanded while the Beirut office resumed its regional responsibilities for UNICEF programmes in the Middle East and as the focal point for the UNICEF/CDR reconstruction programme. The staging posts in Nicosia and Damascus were closed. However, the Damascus emergency unit for refugee programmes in Syria continues to function at a reduced level to assist the refugees still encamped in the area. The Qana office continued limited distribution of emergency food supplies where required, through government health institutions and NGOs until the end of 1982. The office, is now being strengthened for its major role in the reconstruction programme in the south.

43. In poor, densely populated areas such as Sabra, Chatila and Bourj-al-Brajneh, where the water and electricity supply have not yet been restored, operation water jug will continue to supply water via truck and the

operation of mobile generators that pump water from wells and tankers. The four large-capacity generators delivered to the Beirut water authority are being installed at Dbayieh. In the south, the reconstruction of the Ras-el-Ain pumping station and the rehabilitation of the system for the 120 villages is in progress.

44. The repair and re-equipping of the Shahhar Hospital has been completed while the repair of the severely damaged hospital in Tyre continues.

45. Repairs to 12 damaged schools in Beirut have been completed and preparatory work for the repair of the next 40 schools is under way. In the south, repairs have been completed in 68 schools, are in progress in 27 and scheduled to begin in 17 others. Teaching-aids and science equipment were distributed to 200 primary schools, and 35,000 locally produced school benches will be delivered shortly.

46. For the massive reconstruction programme to be completed in 1984, UNICEF accepted technical and financial assistance from three bilateral consulting and engineering teams to assist in three specific components of this programme. The German Disaster Team is working with the Ministry of Hydraulics to assess damages and make repairs to the major pipe system in west Beirut. The Swiss Disaster Team is co-operating in the restoration of the Central Laboratory in west Beirut, and the Norwegian-based Norconsult is providing architectural and engineering services for the reconstruction of the temporary general hospital in Saida and the re-equipping of damaged vocational schools.

Programme of restoration and rehabilitation October 1982 - October 1984

47. With the emergency relief programme well under way, UNICEF prepared, in consultation with the Government of Lebanon and United Nations agencies, a two-year $60 million programme for the restoration and rehabilitation of services for children and mothers in Lebanon. The programme includes projects estimated at $28 million to be covered by the CDR from funds donated by Arab States. The remaining $32 million of the $60 million programme has been covered by generous pledges and contributions to UNICEF from 24 donor Governments, the European Economic Community, 13 National Committees for United Nations agencies, ICRC and four other NGOs.

48. The programme covers residual relief assistance and the rehabilitation and reconstruction needs in health, education, water supply and sanitation, and community self-help. In addition, there are two smaller but important projects relating to small-scale agricultural rehabilitation and assistance to charitable institutions in south Lebanon through local groups and volunteer agencies.

The programme

49. Since 1980, UNICEF has been co-operating with the CDR through funds provided by Arab States in repairing and rebuilding education and health facilities and in improving the potable water supply in the south.

50. As a result of the war, the restoration and rehabilitation of basic services for mothers and children is needed not only south of the Litani river but also in newly affected areas, including south Lebanon north of the Litani river, southern Mount Lebanon, west Bekaa and west Beirut.

(a) Health: Assistance will cover the repair and re-equipping of the central laboratory in Beirut; repair and reconstruction of six dispensaries, six government hospitals, and medical, child-care and community development centres; and the provision of essential basic drugs, medical supplies, equipment, hospital furniture and ambulances for hospitals, district health centres and dispensaries;

(b) Education: Assistance will be provided for the reconstruction of six schools damaged beyond repair and the restoration of others; class-room furniture, teaching-aids and science equipment will be provided to primary, intermediate and vocational schools;

(c) Water supply and sanitation: Support will be extended for the completion of the Ras-el-Ain pumping station; repair and/or rebuilding of 250 water reservoirs and aging water networks in south Lebanon; construction of a water treatment plant; repair of pumping stations and pumping mains; installation of generators in south Lebanon and west Beirut; and the provision of essential equipment to various water supply authorities;

(d) Community self-help (family rehabilitation): In Lebanon, the family is the cornerstone of the socio-economic structure. Recent events have uprooted families many of whom have lost their possessions, sources of income and security. The effect on the physical and emotional well-being of children is immense. Essential rehabilitative and preventive measures must be taken to avoid the development of a handicapped generation and to restore a certain measure of organization to the socio-economic structure.

51. More than 400 local volunteer non-profit organizations work through direct contact with communities and families in such areas as child care, community development, women's programmes, community self-help and assistance to handicapped children. These organizations are mainly co-ordinated by the government social development office which organizes training programmes and provides operational support and guidance.

52. The community self-help programme, in co-operation with the social development office, will support the rehabilitation of family and community life through some of these organizations operating in the affected areas. Support will focus on orphan and foster family care, family income-generating activities; and care for disabled children.

Programme budget

Components	UNICEF	Government (CDR)	Total
	(millions of US dollars)		
Relief for displaced persons	1.0	0.5	1.5
Repair and reconstruction of facilities			
- health	4.5	3.6	8.1
- water and sanitation	10.1	11.1	21.2
- education	9.9	9.4	19.3
Family rehabilitation	3.2	1.4	4.6
Project support	3.3	2.0	5.3
	32.0	28.0	60.0

UNICEF financial status
(as at 31 December 1982)
(millions of US dollars)

Appeal	
90-day emergency relief programme	5.0
Restoration and rehabilitation programme October 1982 - October 1984	32.0
	37.0
Income	
Received and pledged	40.9
Commitment and expenditures as at 31 December 1982	
Emergency relief	5.0
Restoration and rehabilitation	10.8
	15.8
Balance uncommitted funds as at 31 December 1982	25.1

Please note: The $3.9 million of contributions made in excess of the appeals, both for emergency and restoration/rehabilitation, is to be used to strengthen basic services within the framework of the rehabilitation programme.